

History of Lutheran Church of the Resurrection

January 1, 2021



By John Johnston

PLANTING SEEDS (1971-1979)

“We have each other. We, you and me, are this church, this congregation. We have each other; we need each other. For our own good, yes. But as well, for the world’s, through us.”

— Pastor Robert Menter, May 1975.

The handful of families who gathered in the fall of 1971 could not have known where this would lead. They didn’t know whether their newly formed church would survive or grow. And even if it were to gain a foothold, no one knew how it would evolve. What those families knew, and what mattered most, was that they were following God’s will and being guided by faith to start a new Lutheran congregation in Anderson Township, an eastern suburb of Cincinnati.

Its formal name was Lutheran Church of the Resurrection. Over time, many people referred to it simply as LCR.

In 1971 the mostly white, middle-class township was in the midst of a decades-long growth spurt. And yet, its residents still were served by only one high school. Anderson Park District did not yet exist. The Juilfs family still lived on the land that would one day be a park bearing their name. Coney Island had just closed its amusement park rides, most of which were moved to a new theme park north of Cincinnati, not yet open, called Kings Island.

Officials of what was then the American Lutheran Church called the pastor of Redeemer Lutheran Church in Columbus, Ohio, to lead the fledgling congregation. Robert Menter accepted. He had experience in starting a new Lutheran mission, having done it in Littleton, Colorado, in 1961. Arrangements were made to rent worship space at St. Timothy’s Episcopal Church, 8101 Beechmont Ave., just east of Nagel Road. Renting space allowed the new church

to devote resources to mission and ministry, rather than to a building. A contractor reconstructed St. Timothy's fellowship hall so that it could be used for worship.



It's fair to say most residents of Anderson Township took little notice on November 14, 1971, when 35 people from seven families, including the pastor's, gathered in that fellowship hall for LCR's first service. From the outset, it differed from nearby Lutheran churches in

several ways. For one, members worshiped in a contemporary style. The music — composed and arranged by folk musician John Ylvisaker — featured flute or piano and guitar accompaniment. For another, members received Holy Communion every Sunday. They chose a butterfly — a Christian symbol of Christ's resurrection — as their church's symbol.

The fledgling church also stood out in another significant way: Those who wished to become members signed the church's covenant. Members spent 10 weeks writing what Pastor Menter described as "the statement of what we as a gathered group of Christians wish to be." According to LCR's bylaws, each year the membership slate would be wiped clean, and everyone would have the opportunity to renew their membership.



Pastor Menter with John Kenneth Rimmer, the first to be baptized at LCR, March 1972.

In at least one way, though, LCR's charter members were no different than the vast majority of Lutherans then and now: They loved to eat. For the first organizational meeting, on March

30, 1972, the group gathered for a roast beef potluck supper. The meal, Pastor Menter later noted, was “a congealing factor for our congregation.” Members began hosting monthly dinners in their homes, and the congregation was small enough that practically everyone attended.



In October 1972, members signed *LCR's worship space at St. Timothy's is decorated for Christmas, 1972.*

the covenant for the first time. By then, a monthly newsletter was being distributed. It was named *Resurrection Ramblings*, which morphed into *Resurrection's Ramblings*, and eventually, simply, *Ramblings*. The newsletter helped keep the growing number of members informed. A year after the first LCR service, weekly attendance averaged 70.

In June 1973, LCR members agreed to formally organize as a congregation within the American Lutheran Church, which dubbed the fledgling church “Mission 422.” It remained such



A service of covenant recognition was held Oct. 7, 1973. From left, Fritz Bader, Pastor Menter, Bishop Paul Moeller, and Rev. J. Philip Wahl.

until the following October, when the ALC officially recognized Lutheran Church of the Resurrection. Members celebrated on October 7 by holding a service of covenant recognition, by renewing their commitment to the covenant, and by sharing a potluck meal.

In the early years, members sometimes hosted summer worship services at their homes, followed by a picnic. Fellowship activities soon began

to multiply. A women's group and a men's group formed. Couples' retreats, a pinochle club, wine tastings, bowling, and men's basketball and women's volleyball games appeared on the church calendar. Members danced at a sock hop and canoed on the Little Miami River. Picnics and potlucks were plentiful, the latter with themes that ranged from Italian to Mexican to St. Patrick's Day.

Sharing a building with the Episcopalians provided ample opportunities for fellowship and friendship. LCR members were invited to St. Tim's events, such as its annual pancake supper the day before Ash Wednesday, as well as activities for couples. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the two congregations gathered for Hawaiian luau pig roasts.

Indeed, early on, the two congregations found ways to broaden and strengthen their relationship. Less than a year into LCR's existence, Sunday School teachers from both congregations worked alongside each other to lead combined classes for preschoolers through eighth graders. Adults, too, occasionally participated in joint religious education programs. One focused on each denomination's religious heritage; another centered on the promise of resurrection in people's daily lives. By the end of the 1970s, a joint parish education committee had been formed with St. Tim's, and intra-parish teaching teams were leading five different adult education classes.

Joint services also were not uncommon. Sometimes the congregations worshiped together when one church's pastor was on vacation. Combined worship services also were held on



1973 organizational dinner. From left, Bill Tholke, Harry Rimmer, Ginny Rimmer, and Paul Garver.

special occasions, such as Thanksgiving. During summers, a joint worship service was followed by a picnic on the St. Tim's property.

An ecumenical spirit brought the congregations together. Over the 17 years that LCR held services in St. Tim's fellowship hall, members of the two churches forged a strong relationship.

Financially, though, LCR had to stand on its own, with help from the American Lutheran Church. Like many fledgling congregations, LCR requested and received from the ALC a monthly subsidy. The amount, which varied over time, continued for years. Even with such help, LCR in the mid-1970s faced serious financial woes.



LCR's first confirmation class, April 1973. From left, Nancy Schmidt, Robert Schmidt, Pastor Menter, Phillip Amundson, Ilka Breuer, Hans Breuer.

And yet, ministries continued, and even expanded. An LCR youth group was started. And for Thanksgiving in 1975, church members collected food items for the Freestore Foodbank. With that, the church began what became a longstanding mission

to meet the needs of hungry people. Meanwhile, members were using their skills to build LCR's altar, an outside sign, and hand-carved communion chalices.

At the June 1979 American Lutheran Church convention, Lutheran Church of the Resurrection was recognized as a self-supporting congregation. But that did not mean LCR's financial crisis had passed, as it continued to rely on financial help from the ALC missions fund and from individual congregations. More than five years would pass before LCR could truly stand on its own.

GROWING PAINS AND PROMISES (1980-1989)

“Let’s build the building, and build the kingdom, too.”

— Pastor Erwin Streng, February 1988

Over the course of the first 10 years of its existence, LCR was the church home for some 200 families. Most of them had come and gone by early 1981, when Pastor Menter wrote in *Ramblings* that he was not sure the congregation had a hold on the “common unity” it enjoyed in its early years. That was true. In fact, the discord centered around the pastor himself. By late June 1981, he had departed.



Pastor Milt Berner in 1982.

LCR found itself in a precarious position, its survival at stake. Only about three dozen people were attending weekly worship. LCR had no choir, no Sunday School or Vacation Bible School of its own, no outreach program. Even without the expenses of owning a building and paying a pastor, LCR was running a deficit. And assuming that the finances could be put in order, questions were looming about whether the young congregation should stay in St. Tim’s space or find its own. During that unsettled period, LCR was fortunate to have Milt Berner serve as its interim pastor. Working for minimal pay, he provided a steady presence for more than a year during the search for a permanent pastor.

Given the many challenges it faced, LCR could not afford to make a mistake in calling a new pastor. It needed someone who could draw on previous experience not only to minister to members' spiritual needs but to lead the congregation through its growing pains. LCR found that person, and on November 7, 1982, Erwin A. Streng became LCR's pastor.

With the arrival of Pastor Streng, questions about whether LCR would wither and die or grow and flourish soon were answered. The new pastor and his wife, Marie, were personable, caring people who were genuinely



Pastor Erwin Streng's installation at LCR, Nov. 7, 1982.

The pastor combined an informal manner with a track record of getting things done. He embraced the small congregation figuratively and literally. Although it cannot be attributed to him, an item in *Ramblings* not long he after arrived reflected one aspect of his personality: There is no such thing as a bad hug; only good hugs and great hugs.

Before long, LCR saw a surge in membership, attendance, financial commitments and giving, with Pastor Streng noting that such growth "continues to amaze me." Some members pointed out that the influx of people made it hard to keep up with new faces or to know names. It also meant abandoning some customs. For example, by 1984, LCR had outgrown the tradition of Lenten worship in members' homes. But it also meant that by 1985, LCR had enough voices for a choir. To help form bonds within the growing congregation, in 1986 couples or singles began taking turns hosting meals in their homes for small groups of LCR members. Luther's Tables, as

it was called, continued for a number of years, stopped for a time, and was reestablished in 1999.

Through 1984, LCR always had relied on financial support from the ALC missions fund and from individual congregations. Members vowed that would change when they passed the 1985 budget, which called on the congregation to support LCR with its own giving. Indeed, the year ended



Pastor Streng, left, and Marty Herrmann handle grill duties at LCR's congregational picnic, July 1984.

with LCR for the first time receiving no outside financial support. That did not mean LCR's financial picture was bright. Entering 1986, a budget deficit loomed. A Small Miracles program was started to chip away at the shortfall, with a variety of fundraising activities that included a flea market, rummage sale, charity bazaar, Tupperware sales, and collection of spare change in



Charter members celebrate LCR's 15th anniversary, 1986.

"Covenant Cans."

In LCR's early years, the primary outreach ministry was a monthly food and clothing collection for the needy. "Now that we have grown in numbers," Pastor Streng wrote,

"we should also grow in looking beyond ourselves to serve in the community and the church on

a larger level.” By the mid-1980s, LCR had begun focusing its outreach efforts on Interparish Ministries, Lutheran Social Services, Southeastern Ecumenical Ministries, Wernle (a Richmond, Indiana, home for troubled youth), and downtown Cincinnati’s Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

Meanwhile, LCR’s relationship with St. Tim’s remained strong. The two congregations held a successful vacation church school for the first time in the summer of 1980. Joint Thanksgiving services continued, as did an annual summer worship service followed by a picnic. The September 1984 picnic featured a whole pig that had been roasted through the night, a precursor to what would become a beloved LCR tradition.

And yet, questions continued to revolve around LCR’s growth and future needs. In 1985 a church committee asked members to consider several options: build a church; buy a new building; buy an existing building; or buy into St. Tim’s. As the preferred option became clear — move into a



LCR members, from left, Manny Nordone, Dave Downs, Vila Sill and Pat Powell enjoy bridge night, 1986.

new building — subcommittees were established to discuss the challenges and benefits of building a church, and the church council approved the establishment of a facility growth fund.

At a congregational meeting in December 1985, members voted 54 to 2 to build a church within three years. “This is a leap of faith and a step into the unknown,” Pastor Streng wrote. “We ought to be looking for challenges. God didn’t save us and make us His family to sit on our hands, but to put us to work to make His Kingdom grow and be visible that all people may hear of His love.”



Dedication of the Nagel Road property, June 21, 1987.



The decision to build led to many more questions, among them: How big did the congregation want to get? Could an existing building be refurbished? Should a building serve only LCR's



A sign announces LCR's arrival, July 1987.

needs, or also that of the community? Pastor Streng wrote: "... the next few years will test our Christian love and maturity. The future will not be simple or easy."

A facilities committee

considered more than 15 sites, including Comboni Mission property on Nagel Road. An offer was made for that site, but it was rejected. By January 1987, five sites remained under consideration. The committee's preferred site was a 3-acre property on the west side of Pamela

Road near Beechmont Avenue. Second on the list was a parcel on the southwest corner of Clough Pike and Nagel Road. Number 3 in terms of preference was 7.7 acres on the southeast corner of Clough and Nagel.

As it turned out, negotiations for the land on the southeast corner of Clough and Nagel took priority. On February 27, 1987, the congregation voted to purchase that property, which included a house and barn. LCR sold excess land and the house, leaving the church with 4 acres.

The following fall, LCR members — almost half of whom had been part of the congregation for two years or less — were asked to make a three-year commitment to a building fund. Their pledges exceeded the goal by 75 percent. Before construction could begin, LCR members

pitched in to clear and clean up the property. A few members felled a pin oak tree on the site; from its wood was made a cross to hang in the new church sanctuary.

Change also was in the works for Lutherans on a



LCR members cleared the Nagel Road property, which included cutting down a pin oak tree; its wood was used to make a cross for the new sanctuary.

national level, as plans were well underway for a merger of the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches. When the merger became official on January 1, 1988, LCR was part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).



Pastor Streng showing his approval at the church construction site, 1988.

Before LCR's building opened in September 1988, a joint service was held with St. Tim's in honor of the two congregations' long association. LCR's formal building dedication took place on December 11, 1988.

The 1988-89 Sunday School year marked the first time that only LCR volunteers planned, organized and ran the program. But immediately, the new building posed challenges. It was already too small, some pointed out. The lack of partitions between Sunday School classrooms

meant teaching occurred in what was essentially a noisy "one-room schoolhouse."

By the end of the decade, LCR had grown to 105 families. Worship attendance had quadrupled in seven years. More than 90 students were enrolled in Sunday School. The



Completed church building, 1988.

congregation could worship in the comfort of air-conditioning for the first time. Six years of



Church dedication, 1988.

Small Miracles efforts had succeeded in getting LCR's finances in the black. Also, members had embraced the annual tradition of a pig roast, its main dish cooked slowly overnight and tended to by LCR volunteers.

EXPANSION AND TRANSITION (1990-1999)

“What has brought us to where we are? The answer is simple. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ!

Our faithfulness to that Gospel is what must lead us into the future.”

— Pastor Erwin Streng, February 1990

With attendance growing, in spring 1990 an 8 a.m. Sunday service and a 5:30 p.m. Saturday service were added on a trial basis. (The early Sunday service proved to be temporary.) A pastoral concern committee was formed to help prioritize pastor’s duties, and the facilities committee concluded that Sunday School needed more space.

In September, the congregation voted to proceed with a building addition that would be used primarily for education. Pastor Streng noted the extra space could have many possible uses. “I would like to see people coming in and out all week long,” he said. Construction of the education wing began in summer 1991. The space was ready to be occupied by the end of the year. A 25-year mortgage was signed in April 1992.



LCR’S first men’s Christ Renews His Parish giving team (left) and receiving team, October 1991.

The congregation also was stretching itself spiritually. In October 1991, members of LCR participated for the first time in Christ Renews His Parish. CRHP began as a Roman Catholic program, designed to help participants renew and strengthen their faith through group activities, discussion, prayer, private reflection, and sharing of struggles and joys. A group of men from Immaculate Heart of Mary church served as the giving team for 15 men from LCR, with hopes that those LCR men would become a giving team for future LCR participants. A CRHP program for LCR women was held the following November. In the years that followed, CRHP weekends proved to be a means for hundreds of LCR members to grow their faith and to get to know each other better.



A Christ Renews His Parish program for LCR's women was first held in November 1991.

Outreach efforts also intensified. Food collection for the needy became a weekly effort, rather than monthly, with LCR maintaining its own food pantry. LCR and other local Lutheran churches joined forces on a social outreach effort called Once Around Thrift Shop (OATS), which provided low-cost clothing and household items to needy people in nearby Clermont County. LCR's new

Stitch 'n' Stuff group made quilts and school bags for Lutheran World Relief, and children in Sunday School collected items for health kits. Lutheran World Relief and Lutheran World Hunger benefited from monetary donations from LCR members.



The LCR pig roast is a longtime tradition. Members tend to "Luther" in 1991.

In June 1991, a pastor from Mecklenburg Synod in Germany worshiped at LCR and presented information about the Evangelical Church of Zarrentin, located in the former East Germany. Soon after, at a Southern Ohio Synod Assembly of

the ELCA, LCR was chosen to become the partner congregation for the Zarrentin church.

In August 1993, as Pastor Streng prepared to visit LCR's sister congregation in Zarrentin, he asked LCR member Ken Sill, a talented woodworker, to make a few dozen small, wooden crosses. Pastor Streng offered them as gifts to his German hosts. Ken continued making the crosses for a number of years, until his eyesight failed. LCR member Chuck Farmer then carried on the tradition. The crosses have a unique shape, believed to be designed by the Rev. Henry Schiffler, father of Pastor Streng's wife, Marie.

Every new member of LCR receives one, as does every child born into the congregation. Thousands more have made their way around the country and the world via mission trips, National Youth Gatherings, and special occasions for LCR families, friends and relatives.



In late 1994, as Pastor Streng looked to the coming year, he urged that planning soon begin for a building expansion. Nearing retirement, he wanted to ensure LCR's long-term viability. The following August, LCR members began preliminary discussions with an architect. A fall 1995 survey of the congregation revealed that more than 70 percent of members gave high priority to completing a sanctuary building within 10 years.



Pastor Streng and his wife, Marie.

Pastor Streng announced in early March 1996 that he would retire at the end of June after 14 years at LCR. Members responded with an outpouring of love and appreciation.

"Pastor Streng has helped to see this church grow from when it was struggling to stay alive to now when it is a strong and vital congregation," Todd Severtson, chairman of the congregation, said.

"We will especially miss his hugs," said member Sandy Farmer.



LCR's charter members gathered for the church's 25th anniversary in 1996.

Fred Cook, who was full-time pastor at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center, became interim pastor, a post he held for six months.



Pastor Zorn, 1997.

Plans for a celebration of LCR's 25th anniversary were well under way in October 1996 when members of LCR's call committee interviewed Henry Zorn for the pastor position. The lifelong Lutheran grew up on New York's Long Island and had worked in the business world for 15 years as a corporate financial executive. He had pondered the ministry for several years, and then with the support of his wife, Cindy, they relocated with daughters Kristine, Ashlee, and Rebecca so that he could attend Trinity Lutheran Seminary in

suburban Columbus, Ohio. He had never been a pastor, but LCR's call committee was impressed by the experience he gained in his many years as an active layman.

"I felt called to LCR because there was a clear sense of vibrancy about this congregation and its understanding of Christ's mission," he said shortly after his installation service on February 2, 1997. Like his predecessor, he greeted LCR members with a hug.

In the second half of 1998, after a lengthy search for a pastoral assistant, the church council approved hiring Diane Schwiger-Alexander as Director of Congregational Ministries. Her duties included working in the areas of Christian education, youth programs, volunteer programs,



Diane Schwiger-Alexander during building construction, 2003.

and other areas of administration and organization. (In 2005, Diane was approved as an Associate in Ministry.)



LCR's choir assembled at Cinergy Field to sing the national anthem for Lutheran Day at the Reds in 1999.

Meanwhile, LCR's outreach ministries continued to grow, with efforts happening year-round. The congregation began supporting Lutheran Navajo Mission in Arizona. A pastor's discretionary fund was established to provide for local, national, or world needs beyond LCR's outreach budget.

In spring 1999, an 8 a.m. worship service again was started on a trial basis. It was a service of spoken word and prayer using the *Lutheran Book of Worship* and *With One Voice*. By the end of the year, the church council approved continuing the early service.



Vila Sill and Howie Schmidt plan the Memorial Garden in 1999.

LCR also made plans for a Memorial Garden on the eastern portion of its property. "It will be a holy place," Pastor Zorn wrote. "It will be a place to spend time with the Lord and with loved ones." The garden, dedicated on All Saints Day in November 1999,

included engraved bricks of 16 deceased covenant members.

As the decade came to end, LCR's Mid-Sized Congregational Task Force put into words a new vision for the church: "LCR strives to be a Covenant-based congregation, Nurturing spiritual growth and Welcoming all into Christ's community through Word, sacrament, and love."



The Memorial Garden.

What church leaders couldn't have envisioned were the series of disturbing events, starting in the late 1990s, that raised LCR's profile in Greater Cincinnati.

First, in November 1998, swastikas were spray painted onto a Jewish family's home in Anderson Township. LCR responded early in 1999 by leading a coalition of 21 area Christian churches in signing a declaration that renounced hatred and violence and called for respect and tolerance. Members of the coalition also gathered to condemn the act. Later in 1999, white supremacist groups dropped hate literature on area driveways. LCR again took a lead public role in condemning such acts. Greater Anderson Promotes Peace (GAPP) was founded in the wake of such events and remains active today.

In December 2000, the Ku Klux Klan placed a cross on Fountain Square in downtown Cincinnati. LCR members responded with donations to GAPP and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center.

LCR had served notice. Not only was it a church built on love, but it was willing to actively confront hate.

BROADENING THE MISSION (2000-2009)

“Change is an interesting phenomenon. It brings both joy and grief at once. Of course, if we step back, we realize that every day the ministry of our church changes. Every day there is loss of old things and addition of new things.”

— Pastor Henry Zorn, May 2004

With the arrival of a new decade, members dreamed, discussed, and sometimes argued about whether to construct a sanctuary, add space for educational purposes, enlarge the kitchen, and add parking. With 400 covenant members, LCR could have continued to operate within the confines of the existing space, but most people felt it afforded minimal service to the congregation.

One obstacle to growing LCR’s ministry was debt, so on what was dubbed Miracle Weekend, the congregation was challenged to raise \$120,000. Members pledged nearly \$122,000, an amount that was projected to save the church \$39,000 in interest payments. “Miracle Weekend was just the beginning of bigger plans that God has in store for us,” Pastor Zorn said.

Early in 2001, a building committee was formed, and by May, a preferred architect had been selected: Phillip Markwood Associates. In October, a capital campaign was launched with Pastor Streng heading the committee. Pledges totaled \$750,000 over three years.

Meanwhile, LCR had begun a quiet, contemplative midweek Lenten service, with meditations from LCR members, as well as guest speakers from the community. And at 8 a.m. on a Sunday in June 2000, members worshiped at the new Memorial Garden for the first time. It also became a place for Sunday School classes to gather, for meetings to be held, and for prayer.

Technology was providing another opportunity for people to connect. The 2000 LCR membership directory marked the first time that members' email addresses were included. Email accounts for church staff soon were established.

Although LCR members had their own church home, they continued to maintain warm relationships with people at St. Tim's. In July 2000, the congregations celebrated jointly passed resolutions for "full communion" between the ELCA and Episcopalians.

Since its beginning, ministering to youth was part of LCR's mission. The faith of young people was nourished through Sunday School, catechism classes, YouthQuake conferences and ELCA Youth Gatherings.



A contingent of young people from LCR attended the 2000 ELCA Youth Gathering in St. Louis, Missouri.



The 2002 children's Christmas program.

By 2001, the tradition of a summer trip/retreat for the senior high youth had been well established. That year, the chosen location was quite familiar to the Zorn family: New York City and Long Island. The trip included visits to a number of sites for which the city is

famous.

Upon returning home, the youth reflected on the experience. "While looking down upon New York City from the World Trade Center, it felt as though we were on top of the world," Kristine Zorn wrote. "By looking around the city, it was easy to believe that we could share the love of Jesus. We just need to take this feeling 110 floors back down to the ground and prove it."

The horrific events of 9/11, which occurred two months after the youth group's visit, reverberated at LCR long after the Twin Towers fell. America launched wars in Afghanistan, and then Iraq. The Iraq war proved to be divisive for America as a whole, and such strife worked its way into the lives of LCR families. The church became a place where members could engage in difficult, but safe deliberations, even when they did not agree.

That also was the case a few years later when another contentious issue arose: the ELCA's intention to develop a social statement on human sexuality. LCR formed a human sexuality dialogue committee to promote education, discussion, and appreciation of diverse opinions.

Meanwhile, LCR took time to look back even as it looked forward. The church's 30th anniversary celebration included a potluck meal, of course. It also featured a visit by John

Ylvisaker, the composer of the folk setting of the first liturgy used by LCR. He led the music during worship, and later participated in a hymn jam with members. LCR continued to use Ylvisaker's liturgical music on occasion for a number of years.



The anniversary came as LCR moved forward on plans for a building expansion. The success of Miracle Weekend meant that LCR, which had taken out a 25-year mortgage in 1992, could pay it off in January 2002 — 15 years early. To celebrate, a copy of the mortgage was burned during a worship service on May 3, 2002. Among those in attendance was the Rev. Callon Holloway, bishop of the Southern Ohio synod of ELCA. It marked the first visit to LCR by a bishop in 20 years.

“Even though we may grow,” Pastor Zorn said, “our core values do not change. One of the core values is that we care for each other. We are an extension of family.”

Indeed, LCR's Caring Ministry began that year to assist LCR members as needs arose. Various teams were created to perform specific tasks, among them: to pray; to visit members; to offer healthcare information; to provide childcare, meals, transportation, or funeral care. Within three years, 120 LCR members were serving on 11 Caring Ministry teams.



Construction of the new sanctuary.



Members wrote messages and signed beams in the cupola of the new sanctuary.

In August 2003, ground was broken for a \$1.6 million building addition. Two design features were deemed crucial: bright light and open air. In addition, the space had to address unspoken words of the worshippers' faith. And so, a large cross hung from the ceiling. The hexagonal design of the altar followed the shape of the sanctuary. At the sanctuary entrance, a hexagonal wood and brass baptismal font, with running water, represented the living water of the Holy Spirit's presence. Stained glass in the west window, behind the altar, consisted of four liturgical colors: red for Pentecost; purple for Lent; gold for Easter; and green for Epiphany.



Building expansion completed, 2004.

Pentecost in 2004 was on May 30. That day, as the building with its new sanctuary was dedicated, members prayed these words: "that all who seek You here may find You and be filled with Your joy and peace." In the fall, every Sunday school class had its own space, and classes no longer met in the former sanctuary/fellowship hall.

As the new space was coming together, LCR made plans for a praise worship service that featured a band composed entirely of LCR members. In January 2005, a fourth weekend service — called the Joyful Noise Praise Service — was added at 12:15 p.m. Sunday.



Marge and Paul Garver help landscape the grounds outside the new sanctuary.

By the middle of the decade, LCR's membership consisted of 174 families, with 459 baptized members. Although the numbers continued to increase after construction of the new sanctuary, the growth rate was less than expected. The praise service also did not lead to an influx of new members; its start time was moved to 11:45 a.m.

LCR members did, however, continue to show they were willing to serve others, even if it meant traveling 800 miles to do so. In August 2005, the southeastern United States was battered by Hurricane Katrina, one of the deadliest and most costly hurricanes on record. New Orleans, Louisiana, and surrounding areas were particularly hard hit. In November, a work crew of 11 LCR members traveled to Slidell, Louisiana, a city of 32,000 on the north shore of Lake Ponchartrain. Some 1,500 homes in Slidell had been condemned, and another 7,500 needed significant repairs. Over the course of a week, LCR's crew performed demolition work in the homes of those who suffered great loss. They met the residents and listened to their stories.

"It strengthened my faith in God and in people to see the good in so many people," one member of LCR's work crew said.



LCR's first disaster-relief crew traveled to hurricane-battered Slidell, Louisiana, in 2005.

It was the first of many relief trips by LCR members. Subsequent trips involved not only demo work, but also hanging drywall, taping, mudding, priming, and organizing a building supply warehouse. By 2010, LCR members had served on seven Katrina relief trips. In the years to come, LCR members, driven by a desire to assist others, traveled to disaster areas in Iowa, Alabama, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, and Ohio.

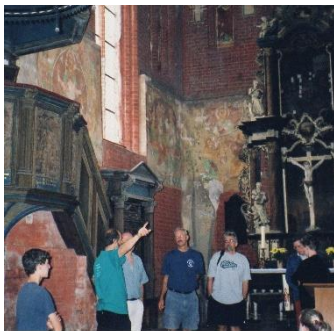
Such outreach ministry was consistent with the vision statement that LCR adopted in 2005: “To become a vibrant, benevolent congregation that serves God’s creation both locally and globally . . .” (LCR’s mission statement remained the same.)

By 2006, it was clear the 15-year relationship with the congregation in Zarrentin, Germany, had enriched LCR by opening the door to its Lutheran heritage and allowing members to hear stories of faith from behind the former Iron Curtain.



Members traveled to Zarrentin, Germany, in 2005.

Late that year, LCR began to work on establishing another relationship with a sister

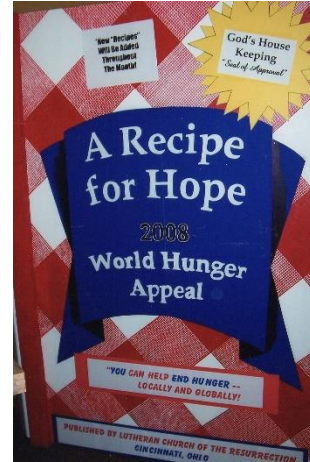


Touring the church in Zarrentin.

congregation, this time in Guatemala. A mission trip to the Central American country was planned for May 2008. “I am certain that this new relationship in Guatemala will also enable us to see Christ in our neighbor and through our neighbor,” Pastor Zorn said.



Fair-trade items for sale at LCR in 2007 (above). Members respond each year to ELCA's World Hunger Appeal (right).



Increasingly, LCR was maturing into a mission-oriented congregation. More money and time were being invested in the work of the church locally, nationally, and internationally. In addition, through his preaching and teaching, Pastor Zorn was bringing attention to social justice issues such as poverty, world hunger, and the minimum wage in Ohio. The focus on social justice made some members uncomfortable, which prompted Pastor Zorn to explain in a *Ramblings* article that such matters were, indeed, grounded in Lutheran teachings. “If we omitted all the sections of the Gospels dealing with those who were socially marginalized,” he wrote, “there would be very little left!”

Early in 2006, the interior of LCR became brighter and cheerier thanks to a new stained-glass window behind the altar. LCR members Beth and Joe Pessell designed the artwork and led efforts to fabricate and install the window.



In 2006 the stained-glass window behind the altar was replaced. The old window is on the right.

Meanwhile, LCR members formed an Earth Ministry team to help better care for God's creation. And in the summer of 2007, a community garden was created on LCR's property.



From left, Janet Nemann, Martha Newfield, and Diana Martel working in LCR's Garden of Eatin'.

The Garden of Eatin' was an initiative of the Anderson Community Garden Network, aimed at supporting community gardening as a way to unite area churches in battling hunger and encouraging sustainable, organic gardening practices. In 2009 alone, the garden produced 700 pounds of vegetables

and fruits for food pantries.

As the decade neared an end, LCR membership stood at 500 members. A few families had departed because of disagreements about theology and biblical interpretations surrounding the issue of human sexuality. And yet, worship attendance in 2009 was the highest in LCR's history. Two-thirds of LCR adult members were using their gifts in God's ministry. The Great Recession had affected many LCR families, so an Emergency Congregational Needs Fund was established to assist members who were struggling to pay bills. And despite the economic downturn, LCR's 2009 budget for giving exceeded that for 2008. What's more, LCR had surpassed its goal for the ELCA World Hunger appeal.

GOING WHERE THE SPIRIT LEADS (2010-2020)

“We are a community of our own (LCR) family and we attempt to take care of God’s global family as we are able. That is our vision, so to speak . . . It is a vision open to God’s future and contingent on our listening to the Spirit and remaining committed to respond where the needs present themselves.”

— Pastor Henry Zorn, November 2013

By 2010, many ministries had become firmly established within LCR. But as the decade progressed, the congregation showed that it was ready to embrace more. The decade also was marked by several key departures and an arrival.

Late in 2011, the decision was made to eliminate LCR’s Associate in Ministry position and call a second fulltime pastor. A primary reason: to provide more spiritual care and nurturing for youth and young adults. And so, LCR members bade farewell to Diane Schwiger-Alexander in



The Rev. Callon W. Holloway Jr., bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod of ELCA, ordains Pastor Nicole at LCR on Sept. 29, 2012.

June 2012, and that summer, LCR called Nicole Kelly.

Pastor Nicole, a Chicago native, had known since early in her high school years that she wanted to be in ministry, and her ELCA home church provided ample opportunities for her to develop ministry and leadership skills. She graduated from Trinity Lutheran Seminary in Columbus, Ohio, in 2008, and then served as director of youth and family ministries at Trinity Lutheran Church in Mount

Healthy until she was called by LCR. Her ordination was September 29, 2012.

“It’s fun to work with young people. You get to share who God is and what God’s about,” Pastor Nicole said as she began her LCR ministry. “It’s my passion to get to share that, especially as kids develop and start to figure out what the world’s about, who they are in the world, who cares about them, and how God cares about them.”



LCR members soon learned that Pastor Nicole was skilled at getting her point across in creative ways. The photo at right shows her on the day she delivered a sermon on Luther’s 95 Reese’s, er, theses.

She quickly made her mark at LCR, not only in ministering to youth and young adults, but also by sometimes leading worship, delivering outstanding sermons, and providing pastoral care.

Meanwhile, Erv Streng, who had retired as LCR’s pastor in 1996, and his wife, Marie, continued to be active members of the church. His contributions included filling in as needed to lead worship; chairing the 2003 capital campaign; providing pastoral care during Pastor Zorn’s

sabbatical; leading a 16-week introductory Bible series; and, of course, giving hugs. Bidding farewell was bittersweet; the couple relocated to Oklahoma in 2016 to be closer to family.

New outreach efforts began early in the decade. In 2010, LCR served as a pilot congregation to implement the Lutheran Malaria Initiative, a multiyear effort by the ELCA to reduce malaria in sub-Saharan Africa. By fall 2015, when ELCA reached the \$15 million goal for the campaign, malaria programs in 13 Africa countries were fully funded. LCR was among the top 100 congregational supporters out of roughly 9,500 ELCA congregations.

Also in 2010, LCR started a Navajo Mission Task Force. Initially, LCR provided scholarship assistance so that children from the Navajo reservation could attend what is now Navajo Christian Preparatory Academy at the Navajo Lutheran Mission in Rock Point, Arizona. Support soon broadened to include hygiene kits and other basic necessities, as well as Christmas and birthday presents for children.



Cindy Zorn collecting items for Manna From Heaven.

Meanwhile, the Great Recession had worsened poverty and hunger locally, nationally, and throughout the world. LCR took part in neighborhood food drives to replenish local food pantries; members joined the CROP Hunger Walk; and, as they

had done for years, they contributed to the annual ELCA World Hunger appeal and purchased fair-trade items.

In 2012, Pastor Zorn opened an email from a stranger requesting assistance for a food pantry called Manna From Heaven in Pike County, Kentucky, an impoverished area in Appalachia about

250 miles southeast of Cincinnati. Led by Pastor Zorn's wife, Cindy, LCR members began providing Manna From Heaven with food, clothing, household goods, and equal parts emotional and spiritual support. As the relationship grew, Manna from Heaven received financial support from LCR's outreach budget, from LCR members, and from various grants. Donations multiplied when LCR partnered with Master Provisions, a Northern Kentucky food bank, and Northern Kentucky Kids Against Hunger. In addition, LCR started a Seeds of Change program, in which members buy seed packets and gardening tools so that people can grow their own food.



LCR member Mark Wegmeyer visits a malnutrition center in Guatemala, 2015.

LCR also began focusing more intently on another mission project. It too, was south of Cincinnati – nearly 3,000 miles south, in Guatemala. After LCR's first attempt to form an outreach relationship in the country ran into problems, events took a positive turn in April 2013 when an LCR delegation traveled to Guatemala and met the Doppenberg family,

who live and work at the Centre of Hope.

Geoff and Rita and their three boys serve indigenous Mayans, with a focus on nutrition, health, personal empowerment, and sustainability. In November 2013, LCR's council approved

a missionary agreement between the church and the Doppenbergs. It called for mutual prayer support, financial support from LCR, and visits with each other whenever possible.

Worship in the congregation also was evolving. In 2013, the church began a contemplative prayer service on the second Tuesday of each month, with a format similar to the midweek Lenten services. It was hoped the new service could reach people who might not participate in weekend church services, but who sought a spiritual presence in their lives.

In 2015, the difficult decision was made to end the Joyful Noise worship service after a 10-year



LCR member Christie Brown cuddles a baby at a malnutrition center in Guatemala, 2015.

run. With many younger members off at college, it had become difficult to staff the all-volunteer band, and it was clear the 11:45 a.m. time slot was far from ideal. However, efforts were made to periodically incorporate the Joyful Noise band into worship services.

Also in 2015, two major news events occurred within a week of each other, both of which would have long-term ramifications for LCR. On June 17, 2015, nine African Americans were shot to death by a white supremacist during a Bible study at the Mother Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. About a week later, the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in the United States.

The ELCA had wrestled with the issue of same-gender marriage for years before giving autonomy to individual congregations in deciding whether to allow it. In January 2016, LCR

began hosting information sessions for the congregation on same-gender marriage. Ultimately, LCR formally approved allowing its pastors to officiate.



Members of LCR and Allen Temple AME Church worship together.

Meanwhile, the Charleston shooting moved Pastor Zorn to address the topic of racism in what he described as one of his “most emotional and heartfelt sermons.” And as a church, LCR responded to the shooting by taking a public stand against hate, as it had done years ago after the swastika incident. On the one-year anniversary of the shooting, LCR joined with Anderson Churches for Racial Unity in community with Allen Temple AME Church to hold a memorial service. Pastor Zorn presided, and the pastor of Allen Temple preached.

As a result, a relationship formed between LCR and Allen Temple, the oldest operating Black church in



Pastor Alphonse Allen Jr. of Allen Temple AME Church and Pastor Zorn were honored in 2019 by the Joseph Dream organization for their efforts in improving race relations in Cincinnati.

Cincinnati. The relationship unfolded in various ways, including pulpit and music exchanges, joint participation in the Undivided racial reconciliation program, and outings to places such as Cincinnati Art Museum. Allen Temple members also accompanied LCR members on disaster relief trips. And each year in June, the congregations jointly commemorated the Emanuel Nine shooting victims.

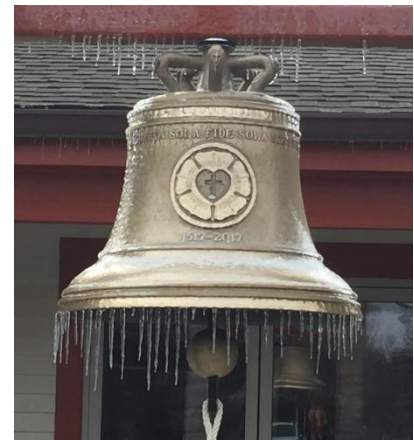


Members of Allen Temple accompanied an LCR disaster-relief crew to St. Louis in 2017 to assist flooding victims.

church council agreed to support such a ministry. A group of LCR members were eager to engage with the issue and the people it impacts. Within a year, LCR introduced an English as a Second Language program in partnership with Heartfelt Tidbits, a local volunteer-based organization that provides support and services for refugees.

LCR also was making physical changes to the interior and exterior of the church. In early 2017, church council approved the purchase of a Lutheran Reformation Bell, cast by the Verdin Company in honor of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Donations from LCR members

Meanwhile, immigration had been one of the most debated issues in the 2016 presidential election. In January 2017, Pastor Zorn wrote in *Ramblings* about his desire for LCR to minister to refugees and immigrants. In March,



LCR's Lutheran Reformation Bell.

— including leadership gifts from two LCR families — paid for the bell, the tower in which it rests, and a landscaped island in front of the fellowship hall.



LCR's clerestory windows were installed in February 2019.

In 2018, LCR charter member Howie Schmidt offered to commission a gift of stained-glass windows for the two walls behind the altar in the sanctuary. LCR member Michael Goldberg offered to design and fabricate the 16 windows, which were installed in February 2019.

As the decade neared an end, Pastor Zorn, who had marked the 20-year anniversary of his pastorate in 2017, wrote a *Ramblings* article that took stock of LCR's trajectory since the addition of the new sanctuary and other space. The church, he pointed out, had grown only modestly in terms of number of members. And yet, the hope expressed by Pastor Streng in the fall of 1990 — "I would like to see people coming in and out all week long" — had come to fruition. An observer could get a sense of that just by noting who was using the church on a Saturday morning. Gathered in separate rooms were Alcoholics Anonymous members, Overeaters Anonymous members, an English as a Second Language class, a contemplative group, and a drawing class.

Even more importantly, LCR's ministries had continued to expand and flourish with only modest increases in giving to the church's operating budget. Much of the success was tied to growth in people's efforts and time, rather than dollars. Dedicated volunteers were extending God's love to people in need in Cincinnati, Appalachia, Louisiana, Guatemala, and Arizona. And when special offerings were taken to support God's work outside LCR's operating budget — such as for world hunger or to aid in natural disasters, for example — LCR members never failed to respond.



LCR's Guatemalan missionaries, the Doppenbergs.

In 2019, a Reconciling in Christ (RIC) team was established at LCR in anticipation of the church becoming one of the first ELCA congregations in the Southern Ohio Synod to obtain RIC designation. It meant LCR would be

publicly identified as offering a safe worship space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual/aromantic (LGBTQIA+) people. It would signal that LCR was a welcoming, accepting church.

June 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of LGBTQ+ Pride traditions in the United States. That month, LCR members placed a large Pride banner on the church property. A week later, on a

Saturday night, the church property was desecrated with hateful and vulgar graffiti spray painted on the entry steps and on the Pride banner.



After the church property was desecrated in June 2020, nearly 200 people gathered to proclaim that LCR is welcoming to all.

The healing began the following Monday. Almost 200 people — LCR members, as well as others in the community — gathered on the church lawn, holding signs proclaiming unconditional welcome and unconditional love for all people. A photo of the gathering was posted on LCR's Facebook page. People representing various Lutheran, Christian, and interfaith communities sent notes that affirmed LCR's efforts to be a welcoming place.

It was not, of course, the first time a hateful act had spawned something good. LCR's response to the 1998 desecration of a Jewish family's home played a role in the formation of Greater Anderson Promotes Peace. The community took note. When the Holocaust and Humanity Center relocated from Hebrew Union College to Cincinnati Union Terminal in 2019, a new kiosk featured GAPP and LCR as a local example of confronting anti-Semitism.

In the spring of 2020, LCR, like most churches, halted in-person services in the wake of a global pandemic that spread a deadly infectious disease, COVID-19. Traditional Vacation Bible School was replaced by a virtual VBS. A planned Senior High Youth trip to Guatemala was canceled, as was LCR's annual disaster-relief trip (replaced by a stay-at-home team doing



During the coronavirus outbreak of 2020, chalked messages on driveways expressed the sentiments of many.

needed work on the church).

Confirmation was postponed.

Still, LCR stayed engaged with members.

Pastor Zorn and Pastor Nicle continued to lead weekend services, which were streamed live on LCR's Facebook page and included live music and the full liturgy. In-

person pastoral care was offered in safe

settings. In late summer, LCR restarted its in-person 8 a.m. Sunday outdoor service in the

Memorial Garden, with members required to follow safety protocols. Members also stayed connected via virtual-format Luther's Tables and virtual hug cards. They reached out with phone calls, emails, or cards. They participated in online workshops, book studies, and small groups. In the fall, Sunday School was held via Zoom video conferencing.



Pastor Zorn visits with LCR members at New England Club in June 2020.

It was all so different. And yet, history shows that LCR faced many challenges and adapted to many changes since that Sunday in November 1971 when a handful of families assembled in the fellowship hall of an Episcopal church.



LCR charter members Paul Garver and Peggy Nordone, December 2020.

Through it all, certain core values of LCR remained steadfast. That is still true today. As 2020 neared an end, members looked forward to gathering in person to honor and praise God; celebrating Holy Communion at every weekend service; signing the covenant; rededicating themselves to the church and to each other; and making a commitment to contribute, serve, and answer God's call as best they can.



CLERGY

Robert Menter, Pastor, 1971-1981

Milt Berner, Interim Pastor, 1981-1982

Erwin Streng, Pastor, 1982-1996

Fred Cook, Interim Pastor, 1996

Henry Zorn, Pastor, 1997-Present

Nicole Kelly, Pastor, 2012-Present

TIMELINE

November 14, 1971: First service at St. Timothy's Episcopal Church.

March 12, 1972: First baptism, John Rimmer.

August 26, 1972: First wedding, John and Judy Gould.

October 7, 1973: A service of covenant recognition celebrates LCR being officially recognized by the American Lutheran Church.

April 1973: First confirmation class.

October 7, 1973: Signing of the LCR charter and official incorporation of the church.

1975: Youth group formed.

1976: LCR receives a \$14,000 subsidy for the year from the American Lutheran Church.

Fall 1977: An adult choir forms, but it is temporary.

1981-1982: The Rev. Milt Berner serves as interim pastor after the departure of Pastor Menter.

November 7, 1982: The Rev. Ervin Streng is installed as LCR's pastor.

1985: The first year that LCR does not rely on outside financial support.

1985: The adult choir becomes permanent.

February 27, 1987: The congregation votes to acquire property at the southeast corner of Nagel Road and Clough Pike in Anderson Township.

January 1, 1988: LCR becomes part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) as a merger of the American Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Church in America, and the Association of Evangelical Lutheran Churches becomes official.

December 11, 1988: Dedication of LCR's newly built church.

August 1991: LCR becomes a partner congregation for the Lutheran Church in Zarrentin, Germany.

October 1991: LCR's first Christ Renews His Parish program for LCR men.

November 1991: LCR's first Christ Renews His Parish program for LCR women.

June 30, 1996: Pastor Streng retires; Pastor Fred Cook begins serving as interim pastor.

February 2, 1997: The Rev. Henry Zorn is installed as pastor.

July 1997: For the first time, a group of Senior High Youth attend a national ELCA Youth Gathering, in New Orleans.

June 1998: Vacation Bible School held in conjunction with St. Timothy Episcopal Church.

September 1998: Diane Schwiger-Alexander hired as Director of Congregational Ministries.

Summer 1999: The first gifts are received for LCR's Endowment Fund.

November 7, 1999: Dedication of the Memorial Garden.

March 26, 2000: Miracle Weekend raises nearly \$122,000 to reduce LCR's debt.

May 30, 2004: Dedication of the expanded church, including the new sanctuary.

November 2005: An LCR crew makes its first disaster-relief trip, to hurricane-ravaged Slidell, Louisiana.

Summer 2007: The Garden of Eatin' is established on LCR's property.

November 6, 2010: Dedication off the Columbarium and Memorial Ash Garden.

September 29, 2012: The Rev. Nicole Kelly is ordained at LCR.

September 2013: LCR's Contemplative Prayer Service begins.

September 2013: The church council approves a missionary agreement between LCR and the Guatemala-based Doppenberg family.

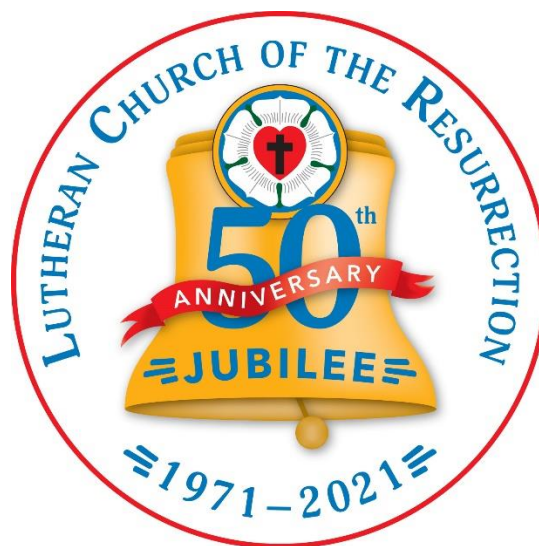
June 2016: LCR participates in a memorial service to commemorate the first anniversary of the shooting of the Charleston Nine at Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. A relationship between LCR and Allen Temple AME Church is forthcoming.

October 28-29, 2017: LCR's Lutheran Reformation Bell is dedicated.

February 2019: Installation of 16 stained-glass windows commissioned by member Howie Schmidt and fabricated by member Michael Goldberg.

2019: A Reconciling in Christ team is established at LCR.

2020: During the global coronavirus pandemic, worship services are streamed online most of the year.



LCR Reflections

The CRHP weekend was awesome! Thinking back on it, I remember the mix of feelings I experienced. The warmth, sharing, compassion, friendships, caring — and the time for reflection with HELP letters made a totally spiritual and moving weekend.

— **Steve Ahrenholz**, recalling his first Christ Renews His Parish weekend in 1998

I don't know what the cynic in me was expecting, but I was completely blown away by the whole experience. Seeing my child surrounded by caring volunteers, singing joyful songs, and performing funny skits all related to the love of Jesus was something I will never forget.

— **Angie McKenzie**, recalling Vacation Bible School

If you are invited to a Luther's Table get-together, do not miss it. You never know what kind of experience you're likely to have.

— **Dan Wazyniak**

My present bookmark for LCR includes my thankfulness for the ministry of Pastor Zorn and Pastor Nicole during this pandemic, with continuing challenging sermons and with innovative ways to serve. In addition, I am thankful for the lay leadership, for the friendly and thoughtful members, and for the commitment of all of the people who serve. My other bookmark is from 20-plus years ago when Polly and I were married. Pastor Zorn officiated, and many helpful, cheerful members and friends attended.

— **Ray Sund**

Amid the horror and pain of that day, we received a call from the LCR phone chain. We were invited to gather in the sanctuary (the current fellowship hall) for a prayer vigil that evening. God's spirit was so present to me in that gathering. We prayed, we cried, we shared and we grieved.

— **Trish Litterski**, recalling September 11, 2001

While standing on the baseball infield, I felt tremendous joy at being part of our choir's Christian witness as we sang "The Star-Spangled Banner" that August evening in front of over 20,000 fans attending the baseball game.

— **Art Hagedorn**, recalling the LCR choir performing at Lutheran Day at the Reds, 1999

There is an occasion that sticks out in my mind and will live in my heart forever. The day of my son Quinn's memorial service was hard. But the difficulty of the memorial for our sweet infant was cushioned greatly by the love of our LCR family. We placed Quinn's ashes in the columbarium and had a short service and balloon launch. I will forever remember our LCR friends who stood in the gentle rain with us and grieved for Quinn.

— **Scheffie Lindquist**

The memory of LCR that I value the most was the time spent working as a team with Butterfly Band members Rick, John S., Lynn E., Allison J., Sara S., Clayton D., Dan P., Jack G., Barb S., and several other people as we assisted, both music-wise and liturgy-wise, with the worship life of the congregation from 1991 until 2004, including the three times we hosted John and Fern Ylvisaker. I also value the memory of the time spent working as a team with John S. and the other Joyful Noise band members and sound crew from 2005 until 2011.

— **Janet Stein Carter**

In 2006, discernment began at LCR to possibly engage with the ILAG — the Lutheran Church entity in Guatemala — as part of a new long-term outreach ministry. In April 2013, I made my first trip to Guatemala as part of a mission team from LCR. During that trip, my life was transformed by a chance meeting with a small 4-year-old Guatemalan angel named Jacqueline. That day became the "first day of the rest of my life" as an advocate for the people of Guatemala and LCR's continuing mission work among them.

— **Mark Wegmeyer**

Our first LCR mission trip to Slidell, Louisiana, was in 2005 after Hurricane Katrina. We gutted a young couple's small house down to the exterior brick walls and the interior studs and electrical wiring. This included furniture, cast-iron bathtub, windows, personal possessions, and mementos. It was like a punch to my stomach watching their two young daughters as we threw all their possessions, including toys and stuffed animals, into a waterway ditch in front of their home, stacking it several feet high. There was a lump in my throat and tears in my eyes as I uttered prayers for their well-being and future while they watched us remove a cherished part of their lives.

— **Curt Martel**

The members of LCR are like a family. A special memory for me is Pastor Zorn walking Grace around after her baptism, hearing the congregation sing “Faith of our Fathers” and watching people smile at her and give her arm or leg a little pat. Church family and biological family welcoming her to her faith life.

— **Kris Kant**

English as a Second Language (ESL) classes were being held at the same time as one of the AA meetings that LCR hosts. We’ve grown to have a very friendly relationship with them. After their meeting they always share the extra doughnuts with the ESL kids. At Valentine’s Day, one of the young girls was eagerly making and passing out Valentines. She gave a card to one our AA friends. On his way out he mentioned to us that it was the first Valentine he had received in 50 years and was planning to put it on his fridge when he got home.

Little acts of kindness.

— **Michael Goldberg**

Faye and I joined LCR in 1990 after a lengthy search for a local congregation. Our three children were baptized and confirmed at LCR. My memories go back to that time when we worshiped in a one-room generic space, with folding chairs and privacy curtains for classrooms. Now we have a full-sized sanctuary, classrooms, fellowship hall and a lower level for expansion. We have grown and expanded in our 30-plus years, and continue as a loving and caring congregation.

— **Steve Crawford**

While preparing for the baptism of our youngest daughter, Grace, we had a pre-baptismal meeting with Pastor Zorn. Grace’s godparents, who were Baptist, were at the meeting. I was raised Baptist, but we didn’t go to church a lot. We discussed how baptism typically comes around age 13 in the Baptist church. It occurred to me that I had no recollection of being baptized at age 13. I asked my parents, and sure enough, I had not.

I told Pastor I wanted to be baptized. “I assume you want to do that in a private ceremony?” he said. I think my answer – no – took him by surprise. And so, I was baptized as an adult in the old sanctuary, in what is now the fellowship hall, in front of the whole congregation.

— **David Brittingham**

I have said it before and continue to say that the people of LCR make it what it is. Caring, sharing, giving, praying, and helping describe the people of LCR. Whether they are charter members, longtime fellow members, recent members or prospective members, they have been wonderful to meet and get to know.

— **Judy Von Busch**

I have appreciated that LCR makes the liturgical seasons meaningful through connections with each other. One of the most meaningful for me was the year we were given another member of the congregation to pray for during the 40 days of Lent. I randomly received June Weber's name. I didn't know June very well, but after praying for her, I felt a special bond that carried forward thereafter. It was an honor to serve as the sound tech for my dear prayer partner's funeral in August of 2019.

— **Christie Brown**

Our congregation was so thrilled to move out of our temporary home into our new property on Nagel Road. Money was tight, so we completed much of the work ourselves. Charlie painted the sanctuary (the current fellowship hall) with charter members Ken and Vi Sill and Tom Hugenberg. Linda Mittermaier, the F&A chair, coordinated an "Island Party" and members planted the tree and perennials that are in the garden yet today. It was wonderful to dream of future generations that would call this place their "home."

— **Alyson Best**

The initial building committee developed plans for the first structure on Nagel Road. LCR was a mission congregation of the ALC, which controlled the resources. We had a very small budget to buy the land and create the building. And we had to select an architect from an approved list. I recall only one architect who had examples of indirect lighting from windows along otherwise blank walls. That firm was chosen.

The building plans had no special parts except for the vertical window in the east wall of the all-purpose room. The committee later was asked if we wanted to retain that window since it would cost a significant portion of the budget. I said yes because this was the reason for selecting the planners. Ken Sill created a cross-themed window to insert inside the plain glass structure. The Ken Sill creation recently was moved to the entryway windows.

Step inside the fellowship hall today and you will see the lighting effect of this single "extravagance" of the original structure.

— **Lynn Ebersole**